

## REACTION TO THE FRENCH COLONIZATION OF INDO-CHINA

and the use of blackmail to get it, had given them away to the police. Wholesale arrests followed throughout 1930-31. In Yunnan a number of attempts were made to reconstruct the party, but they failed through lack of leaders. In 1933 the party died as an organized group: the only influence that has survived is indirect.

Louis Roubaud, the journalist sent by the *Petit Parisien* to investigate the situation, talked with the imprisoned leaders of this party. He found that they had concerned themselves almost exclusively with Yenbay, under the delusion that that uprising would have been the fuse to set off the whole country. There was a conspicuous absence of organizing ability. The revolutionary movement showed itself capable of isolated acts of terrorism and manifestations, but it was weak in arousing the masses because its programme and methods were too much the work of the intelligentsia. The pacific mass demonstrations were the only activities of which the Moscow communists approved, for they capitalized the Oriental force of inertia and proved to European imperialists their dependence upon native labour.

In 1931, when the Communist Party was at its height, six years after its birth in Indo-China, it numbered 1,500 members with 100,000 affiliated peasants. Nguyen-Ai-Quoc was its founder, mentor, and saviour. Recognizing the Annamites<sup>5</sup> love of property and their patriarchal family system, as well as the numerical and intellectual weakness of the proletariat, he planned first to assure Annam's independence under a democratic bourgeois regime and then, by a second step, to integrate it into the Soviet Union.

Nguyen-Ai-Quoc, born in 1892 in a province of Annam where the revolutionary tradition was strong, from his earliest childhood resented

the servility of the mandarinate—of which his father was a member—to the French. He left home at the age of seventeen and worked his way around the world on a French ship. In Paris he practised different trades, lived an austere life, bought books with his savings, and affiliated himself with the French communists. Compassion for his oppressed compatriots stirred his imagination, and was the dynamic ideal lodged in a frail body. At the end of the War, he drew up a list of Annamite desiderata and sent it to the Versailles treaty-makers. He founded in Paris the Intercolonial Union of Coloured Peoples. In 1920 he attended the Communist Congress at Tours, where he cast his vote in favour of the Third Internationale. He founded a newspaper in 1922 in which to denounce the abuses of French imperialism. His work harmonized with the new trend in Bolshevik policy which, after 1923, determined to